

HYE SHARZHOOM Armenian Action ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՍ ՈՒՄ



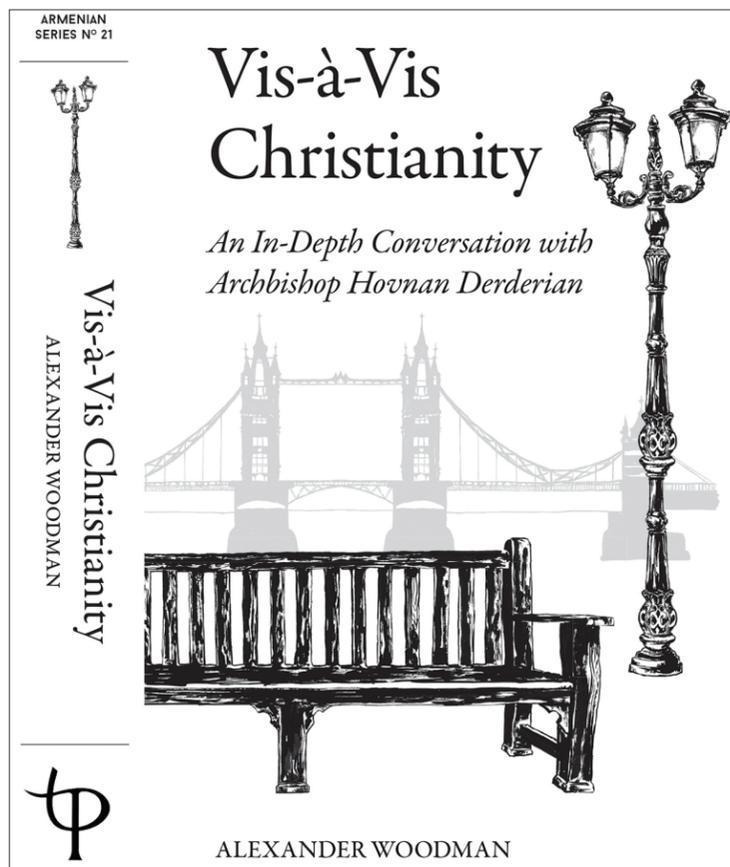
47th Year

October 2025

Vol. 47, No. 1 (171)

Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

Vis-à-Vis Christianity Published- Volume 21 in the Armenian Series



STAFF REPORT

The Armenian Series of The Press at California State University, Fresno, announces the publication of *Vis-à-vis Christianity: An In-Depth Conversation Exploring the Life and the Work of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian* (408 pages, in English, with color photographs). The volume is number 21 in the Armenian Series, and the

publication was made possible through The Clara Margossian Trust, approved by the Trustee, Varoujan Altebarmakian, in memory of all the deceased members of the Margossian Family

Vis-à-vis Christianity embarks on an in-depth exploration of the life and works of Archbishop Derderian. This journey began on one of England's oldest

SEE [NEW BOOK](#), PAGE 2

Armenian Students Organization Holds Events in Fall Semester



ASO students enjoyed an evening of bowling.

KATHERINE ARSLANIAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Student Organization (ASO) kicked off the Fall 2025 semester with two exciting

events, one educational and one social. These events not only demonstrated the importance of Armenian history and culture, but

SEE [ASO](#), PAGE 4

Armenian Genocide Looted Art Project Discussed by Prof. Michael Bazylar and Dr. Taner Akçam

ANAHID VALENCIA
STAFF WRITER

Physical art holds history and recognition – a sentiment Jews fought for after the Holocaust and one that Armenians have been fighting for since 1915, and long before.

Prof. Michael Bazylar of Chapman University presented “Nazi Looted Art Recovery as a Model for Recovery of AGLA: Armenian Genocide Looted Art” on Friday, September 5. In his presentation, he discussed the process that Jews took to reclaim Nazi stolen art and encouraged Armenians to follow in these footsteps. Bazylar noted both the legal and social troubles that a culture must endure to reclaim what was once theirs.

The lecture began with introductions by Berberian Coordinator of Armenian Studies Barlow Der Mugrdechian and Jill Fields, the Coordinator of the Fresno State



Left to right: Dr. David Zakarian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Prof. Michael Bazylar, Dr. Taner Akçam, and Dr. Jill Fields.

Jewish Studies Program, which co-sponsored the event.

“This takes that whole concept of recognition and justice into a realm that I don’t think a lot of Armenians have necessarily thought about,” said attendee

Phillip Hagopian. “Even when we think of reparations, we think about monetary reparations or physical, like real estate, we don’t think about artistic things.”

Dr. Taner Akçam, the inaugural
SEE [AGLA](#), PAGE 4

Andrew Hagopian Presents Master’s Thesis Research on “Preserving Identity Through Sound”



Seated left to right: Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Andrew Hagopian, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian. Standing, left to right: Dr. David Zakarian, Grigor Terpogossyan, Harutyun Amirkhanyan, Katherine Arslanian, Lara Habib, Anahid Valencia, Jordan Mazmanian, Emily Sahakian, and Jonathan Chardukian.

Photo: ASP Archive

KATHERINE ARSLANIAN
STAFF WRITER

Andrew Hagopian presented his Fresno State master’s thesis, “Preserving Identity Through Sound: Armenians in California from 1900–1960,” to a large audience in the University Business Center, marking the first time he publicly shared his research.

The presentation, part of the Armenian Studies Program fall lecture series, was held on Thursday, September 25, and

it was encouraging to see the community come together to show support. The presentation was made possible through the support of the Florence Elaine Hamparson Armenian Memorial Fund.

Hagopian was introduced by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Berberian Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program, who was a member of Hagopian’s Master’s thesis committee.

Hagopian’s project is the result of nearly nine years

of work, combining archival study, oral histories, and family accounts. Hagopian described this period as the story of a “golden generation,” an understudied era in which genocide survivors and immigrants brought with them not only their livelihoods, but also their cultural traditions. His central area of research was in answering the question of how Armenian music survived and evolved in California, particularly on the West Coast, between 1900 and 1960.

Hagopian explained that music was not only a profession but also a cultural lifeline. Immigrants relied on their musical skills for income, yet the deeper purpose was to preserve identity. Without the income component, Hagopian suggested, it is unclear whether these traditions would have endured in the same way. The first generation of Armenian Americans carried with them their memories of tragedy, but used music to maintain community, celebrate heritage, and pass traditions to their children.

Hagopian traced the stories of several pioneering musicians from Fresno and surrounding areas. Mesrob Takakjian, separated from his family at age 16, first settled in Rhode Island before moving

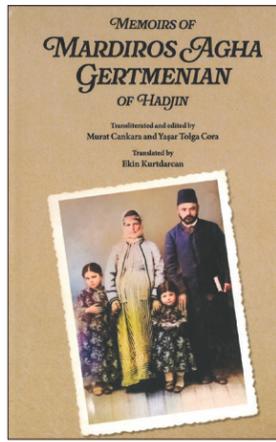
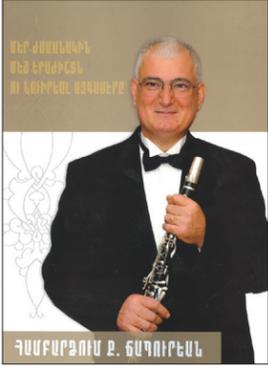
SEE [HAGOPIAN](#), PAGE 7

Armenian Studies Program Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts

The Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program.

Krikor Djabourian, Los Angeles, CA,

for a copy of two books in honor of his late brother, Hampartsoum Djabourian, «Մեր Ժամանակին Մեծ Երաժիշտն ու Նուիրեալ Ազգասերը» *The Great Musician and Dedicated Patriot of Our Times* (Yerevan, 2024), 166pp., in Armenian, English, and French, and «Նոտաների ժողովածու» *Collection of Musical Notations* (Yerevan, 2024) 281pp., in Armenian and English. The book is dedicated to Krikor Djabourian's late brother, Hampartsoum Djabourian. Krikor Djabourian and Christine published the book, along with his musical scores, not only to honor but to preserve his brother's legacy and the life that he lived. The book includes Hampartsoum's biography and musical narrative. It also includes a flash drive of his recordings, with contributions from notable figures whom he worked with, such as Peter Oundjian, guitarist Levon Ichkhanian, and Atom Egoyan. The musical scores were arranged to include all of Hampartsoum's favorite pieces.

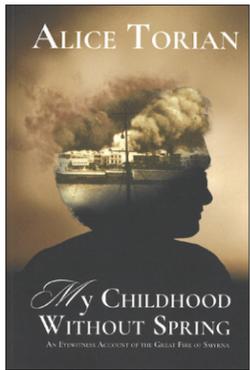


Dennis Gertmenian, Pasadena, CA, for a copy of *Memoirs of Mardiros Agha Gertmenian of Hadjin* (Gertmenian Family Foundation, 2025), 95pp., in English, with photos, translated and edited by Murat Cankara and Yaşar Tolga Cora and translated by Ekin Kurtarcan. The book recounts the memoirs of Dennis Gertmenian's great-grandfather, Mardiros Agha Gertmenian, who was a native of Hadjin. The book offers a rare first-hand account of life in Hadjin, which was almost solely inhabited by Armenians. Gertmenian depicts the forced removal of Armenians, the brief return of survivors during French

control, and the ultimate final removal and destruction by Turkish forces. The memoirs are an invaluable testimony to the history of the town and its people from the perspective of a man whose life story was intermingled with the story of his birthplace and its community.

Andrew Armen Hagopian, Fresno, CA, for a copy of his Master's thesis, "Preserving Identity Through Sound: Armenians in California from 1900-1960 and the Preservation of Western Armenian and Kef Music" (Fresno State, May 2025), 109 pp., in English. The thesis explores the question of how and why Armenians in California preserved their musical heritage after the Armenian Genocide. The thesis argues that music served as a crucial mechanism for maintaining Armenian identity in the Diaspora. The thesis is based on oral interviews with musicians and community members, private recordings, historical archives, and published works.

Peter Tourian, West Caldwell, NJ, for a copy of Alice Torian's *My Childhood Without Spring: An Eyewitness Account of the Great Fire of Smyrna* (Beirut, 2025), 154pp., in English, translated by Vatche Ghazarian, Ph.D. The book recounts the trials and tribulations of Haiarpi "Alice" Torian, an eyewitness survivor of the Armenian Genocide and the Great Fire of Smyrna. Her memoir serves as a rarely captured first-hand account of these two infamous historical events. It is a must-read for all Americans, Genocide scholars, and anyone with an interest in more deeply appreciating the inhuman suffering of the Armenian people living in Turkey at that time.



NEW BOOK, FROM PAGE 1 experiences/dialogue, and adventures, fostering a unique dialogue between His Eminence, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, and author Alexander Woodman. The book offers readers a rare opportunity to delve into a myriad of topics, including the interplay of God, religion, science, life, friendship, love, family, education, interfaith

experiences/dialogue, and adventures, all through profound conversations. It immerses readers in the exploration of the Abrahamic religions, unveiling the intimate stories of a priest whose life is deeply intertwined with Christianity.

"The story of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian is a spiritual journey which began in Beirut,

SEE NEW BOOK PAGE 3

California State University, Fresno Armenian Studies Program

Spring 2026 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Subject Area 3B, Humanities				
• Arm 1B-Elementary Armenian (Class #32671)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	D. Zakarian
General Education-Breadth, Subject Area 3A, Arts				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #33301)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Subject Area 4B, Social and Behavioral Sciences				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #33455)	3	9:00A- 9:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Subject Area UD3, Arts and Humanities				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #33507) Digital Synchronous	3	9:00A-9:50A	MWF	D. Zakarian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #33351)	3	2:00P-3:15P	TuTh	D. Zakarian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #33895) Asynchronous	3	DGT CAMP		H. Ohanessian
Upper Division Armenian Studies Courses				
• ArmS 108A-Arm History I (Class #32670)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
• ArmS 120T-Gender + Arm Gen (Class #37385)	3	2:00P-3:15P	TuTh	Kazan Visiting Prof.

GET A MINOR IN ARMENIAN STUDIES
CONTACT PROF. BARLOW DER MUGRDECHIAN

HYE SHARZHOOM

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Give Your Way to the Armenian Studies Program

There are many ways to support the Armenian Studies Program.

- 1) A gift today could come through the donation of cash, stock, or goods.
- 2) The Armenian Studies Program can also be supported in the future in estate plans.

Hye Sharzhoom is an ethnic supplement of *The Collegian* and is the newspaper of the Fresno State Armenian Students Organization and the Armenian Studies Program and is funded by the Associated Students. Articles may be reprinted provided *Hye Sharzhoom* is acknowledged. *Hye Sharzhoom* welcomes prose, poetry, articles and other material from its student readers. For further information concerning the newspaper or the Armenian Studies Program contact us at:

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Dr. Zakarian Participates in Congress of Armenian Studies



Dr. David Zakarian, left, speaking at the Armenological Congress held at the Matenadaran. Photo: ASP Archive

DR. DAVID ZAKARIAN
SPECIAL TO HYE SHARZHOOM

The second International Congress of Armenian Studies convened at the Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, between July 9 and 12, 2025, bringing together some forty leading scholars, representatives of Armenian Studies programs and centers, and an increasing number of young researchers. Supported by Armenia's Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports and the Committee on Higher Education and Science, the Congress offered a platform to assess recent advances in Armenian studies, outline future directions, and forge cross-institutional collaborations.

Opening and Institutional Update

Key figures welcoming participants included Ara Khzmalyan, Director of the Matenadaran; Zhanna Andreasyan, Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports; Sargis Hayotsyan, Chairman of the Committee on Higher Education and Science; and Valentina Calzolari, President of the AIEA (International Association of Armenian Studies).

In his remarks, Khzmalyan highlighted the implementation progress of the Matenadaran Development Program and infrastructure improvements carried out over the past year. It was reassuring to observe that the Matenadaran continues to undertake significant work in advancing research in Armenian studies and in preserving Armenia's material culture, and that these efforts receive the support of the government.

Broadening the Reach of Armenian Studies at Fresno State

This year the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State was represented by Dr. David Zakarian, the Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies. Dr. Zakarian had the privilege to speak in Session 2, chaired by Cesare Santus (University of Trieste), which focused on expanding existing Armenian Studies programs across universities. Dr. Zakarian's presentation focused on three

interrelated proposals aimed at expanding the scope of Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State. The first emphasized making Armenian Studies courses accessible across the California State University system via Cal State Online, which is the CSU's system's official portal for online and hybrid programs, offering bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and certificate options.

The second highlighted the value of deeper cooperation with existing master's programs, whether through dedicated M.A. offerings or Armenian-focused tracks, to provide continuity for undergraduates and strengthen academic depth.

The third addressed the doctoral level, proposing cross-university collaboration so that students could benefit from joint supervision by faculty across institutions, thereby compensating for gaps in specialist expertise.

Together, these initiatives are designed to broaden access, foster advanced scholarship, and ensure a more sustainable academic presence for Armenian Studies.

In addition to speaking, Dr. Zakarian chaired Session 3, which was dedicated to exploring possibilities of how Armenian Studies programs can engage more actively with the public in their host countries and the establishment of new programs at universities that do not yet have them.

Both sessions generated lively discussion about curricula, cross-institution partnerships, and funding models.

Highlights and Cultural Events

The program of the Congress also featured the launch of Ruben Galichian's newest book *The Hidden Cosmological and Geographical Treasures of the Matenadaran*, which attracted considerable interest for its exploration of manuscript-based cosmology and geography in the Armenian tradition. In addition, the exhibition *1 Year's Eternity-II: Manuscript Replenishments of the Matenadaran (July 2024–July 2025)* was inaugurated, show-casing, among other works, a remarkable 17th-century Gospel known as "the Saviour." Donated by the "Viva Armenia" company, this complete parchment manuscript, originally

Dr. Berberian and Dr. Grigor Discuss Their Research and New Book on Armenian Women in Iran, 1860-1979

NATALIE AGAZARIAN
EDITOR

Armenian women, as a minoritized ethnoreligious and gender category, played a pivotal role in shaping Iranian modernity. Dr. Houri Berberian (Professor of History, Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies, and Director of the Center for Armenian Studies at the University of California, Irvine) and Dr. Talinn Grigor (Professor of Art History in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of California, Davis) studied the emergence of women's organizations and indigenous feminism on modern Iran in their new book, *The Armenian Woman, Minoritarian Agency, and the Making of Iranian Modernity, 1860-1979*.

The Armenian Studies Program invited Dr. Berberian and Dr. Grigor to Fresno State to present their research, on Monday, August 25, 2025.

The presentation of the book highlighted how women's organizations, such as the Armenian Women's Benevolent Society (AWBS) and the Armenian Woman Union (AWU), addressed Armenian women's impact on the social and political development of Armenian women in Iran. These women's organizations promoted women's education, literacy, and empowerment, insisting on women-only leadership. They paved the way for a new form of intellectual power through oral and written mediums.

As written records were fragmented or lost during exile, silenced by patriarchy, or neglected, the authors turned to visual and material culture as well as oral interviews. AWU translated feminist works in the 1960s and supported women writers. These alternative archives made their lives visible.

In response to patriarchal representations in the press, women resorted to press campaigns and cultural events to



Seated, left to right: Dr. Talinn Grigor and Dr. Houri Berberian. Standing, left to right, Dr. David Zakarian, Dr. Hagop Ohanesian, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian.

assert feminist presence in Irano-Armenian society, in the 1960s–1970s. Berberian and Grigor illustrated this period with satirical newspaper clippings targeting women's groups, women's responses, and images from a 1974 historical women's costume exhibition. These works revealed the tense social and cultural climate of the time.

With Grigor's expertise in visual material and Berberian's in textual, the book interweaves visual and material culture with textual evidence to uncover not just what Armenian women did, but how their lives were remembered and represented. Thus, each section of the book is represented by a visual source, including a photograph of three graduates (representative of women's development in education) and a seventeenth-century Isfahan oil painting, misattributed as Chinese art in Kensington Palace, as an example of Armenians' cultural misrepresentation in Iran.

Armenian women transformed exclusion from public life into opportunities for cross-cultural feminism, asserting agency through charity, education, and cultural production.

The authors explained that their own "distinct in betweenness," living lives between multiple cultures, languages,

and backgrounds informed their research and writing. They parallel this in their book by writing including three distinct languages: Armenian, English, and Iranian.

To close their presentation, Berberian and Grigor read excerpts from the book, offering the audience a glimpse into its storytelling tone and narrative style. Their delivery balanced historical analysis with lived experiences, highlighting key parts such as the formation of the first Armenian women's society, the mesh of global and individual perspectives, and the influence of Western feminist thought. The authors' passion for the subject was evident, and their ability to blend intellectuality with humanity left a strong impression on listeners.

Ultimately, *The Armenian Woman, Minoritarian Agency, and the Making of Iranian Modernity, 1860-1979* demonstrates how Armenian women transformed marginalization into activism. Through benevolent societies, cultural production, and feminist movements, they asserted agency, reshaped women's roles in Irano-Armenian society, collaborated with Iranian women, state, and society, and contributed to a broader women's movement in Iran.

from Vaspurakan's Lim Desert on Lake Van, had long been considered lost before its recent rediscovery and final placement at the Matenadaran.

Excursions and Closure

The final day took participants on a field trip to Gegharkunik Province. After convening in Gavar for the Congress's closing session, delegates visited the medieval cemetery at Noratus, distinguished by its rich col-

lection of *khachkars* (cross-stones). The journey concluded at Hayravank Monastery, a 9th- to 12th-century site on Lake Sevan's southwestern shore, with a prayer offered by the Mekhitarist clergy in attendance, accompanied by a moving rendition of passages from the Armenian liturgy performed by some participants of the Congress.

Looking Ahead

The Congress proved highly

productive: new friendships and institutional connections were forged; ideas for curriculum expansion, cooperative degrees, and multi-campus program delivery were exchanged; and the growing presence of young scholars signals a robust future for Armenian Studies.

For those of us at Fresno State, the event confirmed that there is both an opportunity and a responsibility to help lead in this field – locally and globally.

NEW BOOK, FROM PAGE 2

Lebanon, and continues today in Burbank, California," said Armenian Series editor Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian. "Along the way a young man grew to become a spiritual leader of not only the Armenian Church, but the Christian Church at large.... Archbishop Derderian has been witness to many significant moments, from his days at Holy Etchmiadzin, to his days as

Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church. This spiritual journey and exploration of faith will be a lasting legacy of Archbishop Derderian and the reader will have a guide to living the Christian life."

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian has, since 2003, been the Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church in the United States, one of the largest Armenian dioceses in the world.

He previously served as the Primate of the Diocese of Canada (1990-2003) and has held high-level leadership positions in the Armenian Apostolic Church and in various Ecumenical bodies.

Archbishop Hovnan's episcopal ministry and leadership are distinguished by the establishment of new church communities and consecration of houses of worship. Following his

SEE NEW BOOK PAGE 7

ASO Executive Officers 2025-2026

ANAHID VALENCIA
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Students Organization (ASO) held its first meeting of the fall semester on Wednesday, September 3. Elections for ASO officers took place and the following were elected: Grigor Terpogosyan (president), Anahid Valencia (vice president), Jordan Mazmanian (treasurer), Emily Sahakian (secretary) and Lara Habib (public relations).



GRIGOR TERPOGOSYAN
PRESIDENT

When Terpogosyan transferred to Fresno State, he immediately wanted to get involved in an organization. He said that his cousin pushed him to join ASO and run for an executive position.

His main goal is to bring the Armenian community together. He recalled an event that he attended last semester that he perceived as “cliquey.”

“I just want the Armenian community to be more tight-knit,” Terpogosyan said. So far, being in ASO has helped him network with both professors and community members. “I’ve been able to reach out to other people, such as alumni, and the students as well,” he said.

In his spare time, Terpogosyan goes to the gym and spends time with his family.



ANAHID VALENCIA
VICE PRESIDENT

Valencia has been involved with *Hye Sharzhoom* since her first semester at Fresno State, which encouraged her to officially join ASO and run for an executive position.

“I try to be as involved in the Armenian community as I can,” she said.

As Vice President, she aims to bring the Armenian youth together and make each individual feel welcome in ASO.

“Sometimes groups like this can be intimidating, so it’s really important that we have an inviting presence here,” Valencia said.

Since joining, ASO has provided Valencia with the opportunity to surround herself

with like-minded people and grow in her Armenian culture.

“It’s so great to be able to talk about Armenian things and have people actually know what I’m talking about,” she said.

Outside of ASO, Valencia is the news editor at *The Collegian* and is currently interning for *The Fresno Bee*.



JORDAN MAZMANIAN
TREASURER

Mazmanian joined ASO to become closer to Fresno State Armenians. As treasurer, she hopes to spread the word about Armenian issues and events to those who might not otherwise know.

“[I hope to] get more people involved and involve the Armenian community, especially freshmen and transfer students,” Mazmanian said.

Like Terpogosyan, Mazmanian said that ASO has provided her with the opportunity to meet new people. She said that, now, it is part of her responsibility to give others this same gift.

“I’m excited to meet new people because, we are, in a way, higher up and we should be the individuals who are leading everyone,” she said.

Outside of ASO, Mazmanian is involved with the Smittcamp Family Honors College and the business club on campus.



EMILY SAHAKIAN
SECRETARY

Sahakian joined ASO to make more friendships and meet more Armenians.

“I feel like it’s hard to meet Armenians in Fresno State,” she said.

Sahakian, like Mazmanian, said she wants to shine light on Armenian issues and include newer Fresno State students in the Armenian community. She said she wants to help freshmen feel like they have a family in ASO.

While being in ASO, Sahakian said she has learned more about what it is to be Armenian.

“I’ve learned so much more about our culture and our history through these lectures and classes,” she said.

In her spare time, Sahakian can be found skiing up at China Peak.



LARA HABIB
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Habib followed in her mom’s footsteps, who is a former ASO member, when it came to joining the organization. “She was telling me about it and she encouraged me to join,” Habib said.

As the public relations officer, Habib wants to reach as many people as possible regarding the Armenian Students Organization.

“I really hope we can try and do a lot of things for the Armenian cause and teach non-Armenians what it’s like with the Armenian culture,” she said.

In ASO so far, Habib said she has connected with the Armenian community, both inside and outside the academic world. “So many other Armenians have come together to be part of this organization,” she said.

Outside of ASO, Habib is reaching big at Fresno State. One day, she hopes to become a Supreme Court judge and study abroad in Paris.



Left to right: Emily Sahakian, Anahid Valencia, Lara Habib, Grigor Terpogosyan, and Jordan Mazmanian.

ASO, FROM PAGE 1
also gave students a chance to connect and socialize.

The first event, after elections for ASO officers, was the 34th Armenian Independence Day, held on Monday, September 22. The ASO hosted an informational table on campus, handing out flyers and speaking to students about the significance of this historic day. September 21, 1991, marks Armenia’s independence from the Soviet Union.

For Armenians around the world, this day represents strength, identity and national pride.

There was Armenian music playing as the executive officers

Manoogian-Demirjian School Eighth Graders Visit Campus



The eighth grade class of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirjian School (Canoga Park, CA), accompanied by principal Anahid Nalbandian, teachers, and staff, visited the Armenian Genocide Monument on the Fresno State campus on Friday, September 19. They were greeted by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Berberian Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program, who spoke to students about the Armenian Studies Program and about the Monument.

AGLA, FROM PAGE 1

director of the Armenian Genocide Research Program of the Promise Armenian Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles was welcomed as the first speaker and then gave a general introduction to the topic.

Prof. Der Mugrdchian introduced Dr. Akçam, who is widely regarded as one of the first scholars of Turkish descent to write about the Armenian Genocide.

A large part of Dr. Akçam’s speech was about the concept of justice, which goes far past recognition.

“Without justice, recognition is meaningless,” he said.

In 2025, the Turkish government has yet to recognize the

Armenian Genocide. Former U.S. President Joe Biden referred to 1915 as a genocide during his presidential term – but the U.S. hasn’t seen much recognition beyond that.

It can be argued that a large priority for the Armenian-American community is about achieving recognition, since that seems to be the first step in repairing the wound left open in 1915, but Dr. Akçam asserted that this isn’t enough. He said that this drive for more is what led him to begin developing a new framework for restitution, and then he learned of Prof. Bazylar’s work on the Nazi looted Jewish art.

SEE **AGLA** PAGE 7

educate themselves.”

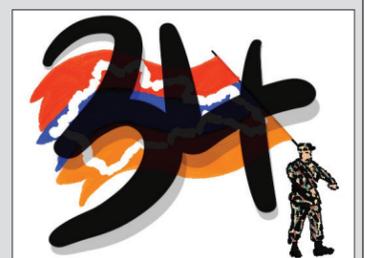
On Saturday, September 27, the ASO held a “Bowling Night” at the Fresno State Bulldog Bowl.

It was a fun night full of conversations and laughs. ASO hopes these fun, welcoming events encourage more students to get involved, even if they are not Armenian.

Looking ahead, ASO has more events planned for the rest of Fall 2025.

The goal is to continue combining cultural education with fun, interactive gatherings that keep students engaged.

“We have a lot of future events planned and hope to see even



Graphic by
Anastasia Eritzian

more students join us,” said ASO President, Grigor Terpogosyan. Stay tuned for future events such as a Halloween party, Friends-giving and more!

Keep your eye out for upcoming information.

You can follow ASO activities on Instagram @fresnostateaso.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

Nellie Chobanyan Participates in Armenian Assembly Internship



Nellie Chobanyan, second row, far right, with Armenian Assembly interns in Washington, D.C.

Photo: ASP Archive

SYUZANNA KOVALENKO
STAFF WRITER

What was once an unexpected opportunity quickly became the best experience of her life. Fresno State student Nellie Chobanyan has lived in Fresno, CA, nearly her entire life and finally had the opportunity to live in another part of America for a few short months. Nellie's interests have always been aligned with international law as it pertains to Armenia, and she takes any opportunity she can to further her interests.

Almost two years ago, Nellie became affiliated with the Armenian Assembly when she was accepted to their Advocacy Summit Program, where students from various universities have the opportunity to lobby and advocate on Capitol Hill. She then proceeded to apply for the Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program in Washington, D.C., where she expected to continue to grow her advocacy skills and knowledge in Armenian issues. For the first time, Nellie was experiencing living away from her family for several months, and her mind was racing with excitement. Knowing it was a city she was already familiar with contributed to her excitement, as she had already fallen in love with the people and the environment long before. Being in an environment that continuously fed her interests in law, challenged her in her networking abilities, and speaking with like-minded individuals only grew her passion. The most enticing part about Nellie was that a new and unfamiliar experience did not scare her, and instead, only motivated her even more.

In addition to her internship with the Armenian Assembly, she has also worked with organizations such as the Armenian National Institute and became a program assistant for the Osgood Center for International Justice. Balancing three internships, her day-to-day varied, where some days she was advocating with the Armenian Assembly and some days she was with the Armenian National

Institute helping build their website and conducting research, and there were days where she did both with the Osgood Center for International Justice. She participated by attending police briefings, hearings, and lecture series. Of these different events, her favorite part was advocating on the Hill by running from office to office, especially when she was able to guide others when collaborating with the Knights of Vartan. "This was an invaluable experience," said Nellie. "It was cool to teach others how to advocate, in addition to advocating ourselves."

Nellie highlighted the value of making connections with Armenians in Washington, D.C., especially through the Armenian Assembly lecture series, where they invited several speakers who were involved with organizations from the IMF to the White House and even different entrepreneurs.

As Nellie has emphasized her whole life, in any internship and project she completed, she always looked for ways to integrate her interest in international human rights law and find ways to learn more about it.

Nellie gave instances where she constantly tried to network with staffers who were involved in foreign affairs within congressional offices. With any research project she conducted, she ensured she could specialize in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, where she was bound to find various articles on human rights violations.

Her work with the Osgood Center for International Justice, allowed her to attend the events of her choice, which she consistently picked those that were closely related to international and human rights law, which opened the door for her to meet ambassadors and diplomats.

One of her favorite parts of her experience was the lifelong friends she met in the program. A group of nearly 20 people, coming from different areas across the United States, but each connected by their Armenian identity. She built long-lasting relationships that she maintains, despite the

Award-Winning Film "There Was, There Was Not" Screened at CineCulture Film Series on Campus

RACHEL YEPREMIAN-OWENS
STAFF WRITER

On Friday, September 19, in honor of the 2-year anniversary of the Artsakh war, the Media, Communications and Journalism CineCulture course collaborated with the Armenian Studies Program to screen Emily Mkrtychian's film, "There Was, There Was Not."

CineCulture Prof. Mary Husain and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian of the Armenian Studies Program introduced the film and the director, Emily Mkrtychian. Prof. Husain and Prof. Der Mugrdchian have been working together for more than seventeen years to screen Armenian themed movies as part of the CineCulture series.

"There Was, There Was Not" not only highlighted the very different, but beautifully connected lives of four influential women in Artsakh, but also showed what life was, what it is like now, and what it could be in Artsakh.

Mkrtychian's film process began with a different intent than what was eventually screened. She originally intended to create a film that documented and celebrated women in Artsakh as unique forces in their community. She was even working with an artist to create life sized portraits of these women and had a goal of bringing her film to a close in 2020.

The Artsakh war broke out in September 2020, and everything changed. Mkrtychian found herself adjusting the trajectory of the film, still partially accomplishing what she originally desired, but there was now an additional element to the story.

Mkrtychian's movie put life in Artsakh into perspective for an audience of both Armenians and non-Armenians. Sose, Gayane, Svetlana, and Siranush were all citizens of Artsakh and lived such different lives, yet agreed in their hearts on one thing – Artsakh was home.

Sose Balasanyan was a world-class martial artist in Judo, full of pure joy and optimism for the future. She sacrificed herself for her land and her people and joined the Artsakh army as a front-line soldier. She had dreams of going to the Olympics one day; she stopped dreaming when war became her reality.

Gayane Hambardzumyan de-



Photo: ASP Archive

Director Emily Mkrtychian, fourth from right, and students and faculty at the screening of Mkrtychian's film.

voted her life to serving people, fighting for rights and helping women. She left behind the one and only Women Resource Center she established in Artsakh and fled to Armenia to continue her work, aiding the displaced refugees of her own homeland.

Svetlana Harutunyan was one of the first and only women to work as a deminer, in war areas; a truly dangerous job, but she only cared to help her land recover. She was able to reunite with her daughters, who were living in Armenia, before the blockade of travel from Artsakh to Armenia was implemented.

Siranush Sargsyan was a political activist, campaigning for a spot on the local city council and advocating for women's rights. She is now working as a very successful journalist who continues her efforts in making Artsakh a place that Armenians and non-Armenians will never forget. Through the tears and the sorrows, they could only hold onto their precious home for so long.

After watching the movie, the audience had the opportunity to have an open discussion with the director to gain more understanding behind her purpose and thought process of the film.

Mkrtychian stated that Artsakh was a very dangerous place during her time of filming. She had no training in conflict journalism and often found herself questioning whether she should or shouldn't be in certain areas and if it was worth the risk to capture for the film, including going to the front lines of battle.

"During that time, I asked Sose to film herself on her camera and ultimately Sose told me many, many times that she didn't want me there because of the

amount of danger," Mkrtychian said. "She would describe bullets and shrapnel breezing just by her face and seeing a lot of very scary things. I trusted her basically."

Her experience with conflict journalism showed that journalists from all over the world are very swift to travel to a conflict zone and to share the stories with the rest of the world. Having spent four years in Artsakh, Mkrtychian struggled to understand how these fellow journalists that spent a few days in the region could possibly be providing the world with the full story. This is because their primary focus was on the same thing everyone else was focusing on. The battle, the weapons, the bombs, and while these are all very important, their perception was limited.

"Whenever a bomb was dropped, everyone would run toward the explosion, everyone would run there," said Mkrtychian. "I kind of made a decision for myself that there were people documenting that. I would always run towards one of the women and their experience and their emotional journey in that moment as something that no one else seemed to be pointing a camera at."

Mkrtychian's film impacted many of the audience members. The audience asked questions, made comments and reflections that they shared throughout the after-film discussion. With the immense amount of tragedy and division occurring in the world currently, audience members expressed their thankfulness to Mkrtychian. They expressed their gratitude for her efforts over long, tedious years putting together a film that has the ability to impact

SEE MKRTYCHIAN PAGE 6

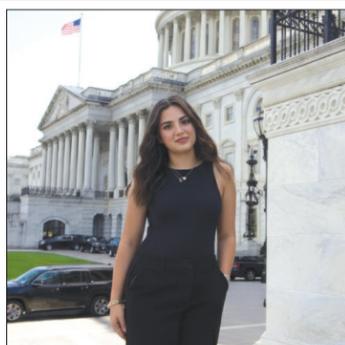


Photo: ASP Archive

Nellie Chobanyan

different lives they each live.

When Nellie was asked about the most valuable lesson she learned, she responded that

"Intentionally networking where you build a relationship that is not strictly transactional is the biggest takeaway that I had this summer, and I've tried to employ that in my life in Fresno as well."

Nellie encourages and recommends students to experience this internship, highlighting the fact that you do not have to be involved in international affairs to participate, as the Assembly makes every effort to open doors for you regardless of your interests.

This experience opened Nellie's eyes to the broad Ar-

menian community that is truly everywhere. It made her feel more involved as she stated, "not only in the Armenian community but also in the American community, and the privilege of being able to advocate as an American for your community back home."

Nellie has understood that her life isn't just limited to Fresno, "I can go out into the world and make the change that I've always dreamed of making. Now it is more realistic, and it motivates me to work harder here in Fresno to make the change I want to make."

Dr. Zakarian Explores “Women’s Lives in Medieval Armenia”



Left to right: Sosse Baloian Yanez, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Dr. David Zakarian, and Dr. Talin Suciyan.

RACHEL YEPREMIAN-OWENS
STAFF WRITER

Photo: ASP Archive

On Friday, May 9, 2025, Dr. David Zakarian, Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State, gave a lecture titled “Glimpses into Women’s Lives in Medieval Armenia.” The purpose of the lecture was to explore how Armenian historical sources offer rare, yet valuable insights into the experiences of women in the Middle Ages.

The lecture was part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring Lecture Series and was held on the Fresno State campus.

Dr. Zakarian’s research is centered around the role of women in Armenian historiography. He focuses on the role of women as recorded in Armenian manuscripts and shows the underrepresentation of women, since around 95% of the Armenian manuscript writers were men.

Dr. Zakarian opened his lecture with a question: “Who were some of the historical figures you learned about when you were in school?” This is one of the various struggles we as a society face, the lack of representation of women in historical sources, and this problem points back to the ubiquitous patriarchy.

Women’s voices were purposefully excluded from the conversation.

“We need to put this in our school curriculum,” Dr. Zakarian said. “We need to present these figures and try to instill in women these ideas about how they are a part of this community and they can’t be silenced. Their voices should be heard.”

Dr. Zakarian pointed out that his main source of research is looking at the historical colophons. Colophons are memorial messages written by the scribe, typically added to the end of the manuscripts.

Providing more details about the manuscript itself, the colophon shows who sponsored the manuscript and paid for it to be produced, as well as stories of the production process of the manuscript that the scribe experienced. Often, these stories mention women and/or are written by women.

The Gospel of Sassoon was

the first manuscript Dr. Zakarian spoke about and he mentioned that the colophon at the end of the manuscript was dedicated to a woman named Kata, hoping that the readers will pray for her and God will deem her as one of the wise, holy virgins.

The description of the colophon addresses Kata’s mother, Melekset, and her royal lineage calling her *taguhi* or “queen,” her role as being a decorator of churches, protector of priests, guardian of the holy and the widows, dressing the naked and feeding the hungry and eventually reaching the point of Kata’s birth. Kata was beautiful and greatly respected, yet passed early on while giving birth to twins. Her mother sponsored the manuscript in honor and memory of her daughter.

Dr. Zakarian then moved on to speaking about Gandzasar, a beautiful Armenian monastery in Artsakh that is now under Azerbaijani control.

Inside the monastery is a wonderful vestibule, also called a *gawit*. The writing says that the *gawit* was built by Mamkan, the Lord of Artsakh’s wife, meaning that it was built with her money and her money alone. However, this was not the only building Mamakan sponsored.

There is a chapel in Artsakh called Surb Stepanos, specifically in a village called Vajar. There is another inscription mentioning Mamkan, which, interestingly, was written in the first person stating that she had built churches and donated her own land in Alnchay as a gift. She had her own money, property and assets and could do whatever she pleased with it. Mamkan also contributed to the renovation of the Kecharis Monastery in Kotayk province of Armenia. Mamkan played a vital role in Armenian history, being recognized as “the comfort and consolation of all soldiers and cavalry, as well as the church and clergy.”

Other influential women mentioned in the talk were Jahan-Melik who paid for the manuscript with her own money following the process of being a treasured bride, Xalim-Xatum who suffered and preserved through the death of her three young sons and her husband, Zapel who was a 13th-

Writing the Future in Armenian: Students Embrace Language and Culture in Arm 1A Class

NELLIE CHOBANYAN
STAFF WRITER

At Fresno State, the Armenian 1A-Elementary Armenian course continues to draw students from a variety of majors and backgrounds, united by a shared goal: learning the Armenian language and connecting more deeply with its culture.

For many, the class is more than just fulfilling a requirement, it’s about identity and belonging. “I’m taking this course to learn how to speak Armenian and get in touch with my roots,” shared junior Emma Wyatt. Others echoed this sense of connection to heritage and community. Junior Jayden Atachian explained, “I am half Armenian, so I thought I should learn the language. I want to be able to understand and speak with family and friends.”

Freshman Lara Habib described both excitement and progress in her first semester of the course. “I want to become fluent in Armenian,” she said. “I love it! It’s very interactive, and I’ve learned so much already. I hope to make more Armenian friends and speak Armenian fluently.” Junior Sylvie Khatchikian shared a similar passion for strengthening her language skills. Pursuing a minor in Armenian Studies, she said she chose the class because Armenian is her mother tongue and she wants to deepen her connection to her culture. “I want to become better at reading and writing,” she added, testifying that she “loves it.”

Junior Laurel Machoian also enrolled with the goal of building greater fluency. “I want to learn more Armenian fluency since I’m Armenian, and I expect to learn the basics of the Armenian language and grammar,” she said. Reflecting on her experience so far, she added, “I really enjoy the material and the teaching methods. It’s clear that I will get out of this class what I put into it.”

Freshman Vanessa Ventura offered a different perspective. While not Armenia herself, she said she wanted to expand her language skills. “I want to learn Armenian because I work around many Armenians, and I want to learn it as a third language,” Ventura explained.

Dr. David Zakarian, who



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

Dr. David Zakarian, standing center, with elementary Armenian language students.

teaches the course, emphasized that teaching Armenian 1A requires a unique approach. “Language teaching is a different set of skills... it’s less lecturing and more interacting,” he explained. He noted that the diversity of students, some knowing nothing of Armenian and others more fluent, presents a challenge. “Students come into the class with different levels of proficiency, some know conversational Armenian, which is influenced by different countries’ dialects, and some know absolutely nothing about the language, so bringing everyone to the same level is difficult, but we start from scratch and by slowly teaching the letters and alphabet we are able to carry into conversations,” he said.

To make learning accessible, Dr. Zakarian uses transliteration, videos, and online resources. He hopes to create a new Western Armenian textbook in the future to better align with teaching standards. “It hasn’t started yet, but the idea is there to create a better and more accessible textbook,” he shared.

Reflecting on student growth, he recalled a past student who arrived knowing nothing of Armenian but became one of the most fluent speakers in the class. “Even fluent Armenians were surprised by his pronunciation,” Dr. Zakarian said.

On the broader significance of the program, he stressed the importance of preserving Armenian at Fresno State. “We have such a big, strong community here... the Program wouldn’t be as strong and influential as it

is without that community,” he noted, citing the contribution of Armenian scholars since 1974 and the excellent library resources available to students.

By the end of the course, Dr. Zakarian sees students either mastering language skills as part of a requirement or using the language to strengthen personal connections. “I encourage them to use it with their family and friends... it expands your brain and builds new connections,” he said. He emphasized that learning Armenian also equips students with broader skills for language acquisition and cultural understanding.

Dr. Zakarian highlighted the Armenian Genocide Monument on campus, noting, “I like to encourage my students by showing them the Armenian Genocide Monument here at Fresno State. Unlike most students, those who complete this class will be able to read the Armenian inscriptions on the monument, setting themselves apart.”

Looking ahead, Dr. Zakarian hopes to create interactive, digital resources that make Armenian fun and practical for the 21st century. “I want the classes to be fun and interactive... not a chore for students,” he said. “Even if you don’t use it later, you learn how to learn, and the more languages you know, the more human you are.”

As these students’ experiences show, Armenian 1A is more than just an academic class; it’s a pathway to fluency, cultural understanding, and stronger ties to community.

MKRITCHIAN, FROM PAGE 5

a generation. Mkrichian’s films have been screened in various world-wide film festivals and are continuing to be shown. She mentioned that all four of the women have seen “There Was, There Was Not,” and

century woman who worked in manuscript copying and another woman, Alits, who was also a well-versed scribe whose writing was so valuable, she would only marry the man who could copy her style of writing to almost perfection.

These stories are just a few out of many about influential women of Armenian history, not often talked about and more

when it was screened in Armenia, with them in the audience, it was an emotional experience.

The never-failing goal of a film like this is to keep Artsakh’s history alive and the beauty of these lives that were once lived there, honored.

so not known at all. “Through sustained research and a commitment to challenging patriarchal silences, the women who played pivotal roles in ancient history can be restored to visibility and acknowledged for their contributions,” stated Dr. Zakarian. “Recognizing their agency not only affirms their rightful place in the historical record but also provides

“I show photos of Gayane’s family, those kind of black and white archival photos,” Mkrichian said. “She doesn’t have those photos, those were all left behind. There’s some way in which this film keeps alive something that they miss.”

empowering connections and models for women today.”

“It is my personal belief that every woman deserves this, every person, but especially women because they were constantly erased from these narratives,” concluded Dr. Zakarian. “They deserve to be represented on the pages of books so that we talk about them... I think these stories should be told.”

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HAGOPIAN, FROM PAGE 1
to California. A clarinetist, he recorded with Columbia Records in 1929, later collaborating with vocalist Oscar Kevorkian. Together, they capitalized on Armenian and diverse immigrant audiences. Hagopian then discussed how Oscar Kevorkian became one of the most prominent performers in Fresno during the 1920s, through the 1950s. He played at nearly every local function, founded the Kevorkian Record Company, and imported Armenian records, helping the music widely circulate. Though he died suddenly in 1959, his homemade recordings remain today.

The musical contributions of Hovagim Der Hagopian, Hagop Aslanian, and Hovsep Bedrosian demonstrated how early Armenian immigrants in California preserved their cultural identity through sound. Der Hagopian, who immigrated through Ellis Island to Reedley, performed on the clarinet at picnics and community events. Although his life was cut short in a car accident, his homemade disks remain the only surviving evidence of his musical works.

Aslanian, a violinist from the old country and founding member of the Knar Orchestra, was recognized as one of the most accomplished performers in the Fresno Valley. His ability to charge higher prices for recordings reflected his reputation. Bedrosian, a *zoorna* player who eventually became a farmer, continued performing as a pastime.

His private recordings, shared primarily within family and community circles, functioned as a means of maintaining cultural continuity and securing a sense of belonging in America. Together, their work demonstrates how music also served as a form of cultural preservation.

In addition to individual performers, Hagopian highlighted families who helped spread Armenian music. The

Nishkian family, originally from Constantinople, opened a bike and record shop in Fresno, selling not only Armenian but also international records. They later expanded to photography and instruments, becoming a part of Fresno's cultural life. Later, Margo and Mattho Margosian established *Radio Margo* in Oakland. Recognizing the lack of an ethnic record importer since the 1930s, they filled an important demand in Fresno and beyond. Hagopian's research into the Margosian family was particularly difficult, but by reaching out to relatives, he uncovered an autobiography of Margo Margosian recorded on cassette in 1968.

Community spaces were equally important. Coffee houses (*srjarans*), restaurants, and Armenian picnics served as spaces for musicians and gathering points for immigrant families. These spaces fostered the evolution of traditional music into what became known as *kef* music, incorporating foreign instruments and early amplification techniques.

Hagopian emphasized the role of teachers and cultural transmitters. *Kanuni* Garbis Bakirgian, described as "the flame," taught the *oud* to younger musicians, including Richard Hagopian, who would later become a central figure in Armenian American music. International performers such as *Udi* Hrant Kenkulian, who even gave a concert at Fresno State many years ago, also influenced the local scene and connected diasporic communities.

By the mid-twentieth century, the groundwork laid by the first generation ensured that Armenian music would not only survive, but also adapt.

Homemade records, professional recordings, and live performances preserved their heritage while adapting to life in California.

"The first generation of Armenian Americans, with what

Opinion — Armenia-Azerbaijan Agreement Generates Discussion in Armenian Diaspora

ANAHID VALENCIA
STAFF WRITER

Since its signing on August 8, the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) project has brought hefty discussion to the Armenian diaspora. A poll by Gallup shows that nearly 60% of Armenians oppose the corridor.

U.S. President Donald Trump brought Nikol Pashinyan, the prime minister of Armenia, and Ilham Aliyev, the president of Azerbaijan, together to broker the potential peace deal.

They signed for the implementation of TRIPP in August, but the project won't officially begin until the proposal passes through Armenia's parliament.

The TRIPP route will travel across Armenia's southern region to connect Azerbaijan with Nakhichevan.

Since Armenia and Azerbaijan have a decades-long history of conflict, with Azerbaijan ethnically cleansing Nagorno Karabakh as recently as 2023, some have raised questions regarding sovereignty and the general intelligence of installing this corridor.

Trump, however, believes he has ended all tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan in facilitating the deal. During an

August briefing, he claimed that the two countries will be "friends for a long time."

A positive for Armenia in the context of TRIPP is that it is supposed to be managed according to Armenian law. Still, trusting Azerbaijan in this land interception is a subject up for debate.

Overall feelings about Pashinyan are negative among Armenians. The Gallup poll reported that just 13% of respondents believe that he is "completely positive," and the number of his supporters has only decreased since his term began.

The topic has hit home for two Armenian students at Fresno State. Grigor Terpogosyan, the president of the Armenian Students Organization, was the first to weigh in.

"It shouldn't have happened," Terpogosyan said. "Everyone focuses on the benefits of Azerbaijan. This helps them greatly."

Terpogosyan believes that the main winner here is Azerbaijan. As of right now, and until it's implemented, it's hard to definitively tell. Though, the past trends with Armenia and Azerbaijan don't paint a pretty picture.

Major media sources covered the international news when the TRIPP deal was signed, but

Terpogosyan believes this isn't enough. He said that, at first, he didn't even know that TRIPP was being agreed to – he only knew of some sort of peace deal.

"All I knew was that Azerbaijan was trying super hard to create that corridor," he said. "It's a huge change and can be a risk to the Armenians later on for sure and it only benefits the Azeris."

Nellie Chobanyan said that she has some reservations, but holds out hope for TRIPP.

"If implemented responsibly, it has the potential to reduce regional tensions and open up opportunities for economic growth, stability and integration with the broader international community," she said.

Though there might be some light at the end of TRIPP's tunnel in terms of peacemaking, Chobanyan explained that there are other important Armenian issues that need to be addressed.

"My main concern is that the humanitarian and security issues Armenia continues to face, especially those connected to Nagorno-Karabakh and the treatment of hostages, might be overlooked in the name of progress," she said.

Time will tell how effective Pashinyan and Aliyev's decision was in signing the TRIPP deal at truly creating peace.

AGLA, FROM PAGE 4

Thus, the Armenian Genocide Looted Art (AGLA) Research Project was born. In its early stages, Dr. Akçam stated that Prof. Bazylar was one of the only people to hear out his plan.

"Unfortunately, I couldn't find open ears within the Armenian community, but Prof. Bazylar was willing to listen," said Dr. Akçam.

After Dr. Akçam concluded his portion of the presentation, Prof. Bazylar took the stage. He provided some background information about how his personal journey with recovering Nazi looted art got started.

Prof. Bazylar told the audience that at the Nuremberg Trials it was reported that when Nazis were transporting stolen art, it took as many as 30,000 railway cars to do so.

At the time, in the 1930s and 40s, the total monetary value of Nazi stolen art was roughly

\$2.5 billion which, in today's currency, is about \$20.5 billion. After the Holocaust, people began questioning how they were going to retrieve the art.

President Bill Clinton's administration was very interested in the Holocaust Restitution movement, according to Prof. Bazylar, who agreed with Dr. Akçam about the idea that recognition is not enough – the Jews needed justice.

Armenians, however, have not been so lucky.

Bazylar brought up several lawsuits that have occurred over the years, many involving an individual discovering a piece of stolen art that once belonged to their family. Upon discovery, the individual had to go through a lengthy legal process to obtain the art.

One case even went to the Supreme Court. These kinds of cases gained national

attention, which greatly helped the furthering of the Holocaust Restitution movement.

Though the U.S. still hesitates to use the word "genocide," several world leaders acknowledge 1915 as a massacre or tragedy, which serves as some sort of recognition.

Dr. Akçam said that Armenians should stop focusing on the wording of 1915 alone and get into the legality of reparations – just like the Jews did after the Holocaust.

"We don't have any legal framework that follows the recognition," Dr. Akçam said.

Though the fight to reclaim Armenian art is just beginning, Dr. Akçam encouraged young people to become involved with the AGLA mission.

"To fight for justice is the biggest moral obligation for us," he concluded.

they went through, escaping tragedies beyond belief, came to America, settled, built communities, continued their culture, and with the technology that was forming, they captured their livelihood for future generations," reflected Hagopian.

Hagopian urged people to digitize and archive family recordings, as these unique treasures contain not only the music, but the memories of family gatherings, cultural practices, and survival stories.

For Hagopian, these artifacts embody "the wonder of recorded memory."

Through his research, Hagopian demonstrated how Ar-

menian immigrants in California between 1900 and 1960 preserved identity through sound. Because of these early musicians, Armenian traditions could en-

sure and evolve in a new land. Hagopian's work pays homage to this generation and highlights the need to protect their recordings and stories.

NEW BOOK, FROM PAGE 7

distinguished record in Canada, his leadership in the Western Diocese has been prolific in the last two decades.

Between 2006-2022, he has consecrated twenty-four churches and parish and community centers throughout the Western Diocese.

The author, Dr. Alexander Woodman is a professor of preventive family medicine and public health who has been widely recognized for his research work

in the Middle East and North Africa regions.

Dr. Woodman has served as an advisor to royals, presidential candidates, and diplomats and is a faculty member at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

Vis-à-vis Christianity will be available through Abril Books in Glendale and the NAASR Bookstore in Belmont, MA.

Copies will also be available through Amazon.

In Tribute: My Favorite Town, Fresno, California by William Saroyan



William and his cousins posing in Fresno. Helen Minasian (cousin), Archie Minasian (cousin), William Saroyan, Kirk Minasian (cousin), 1920s, Fresno. Photo Courtesy: Forever Saroyan

“There is no end to a town, any town, if it’s where you were born in the first place, and where you were born again, as it is written all men must be. But oh the weather there, the heavenly weather there in the spring, the summer, the autumn, the fall, the winter—the hot sun and the heavy rain, the new green of spring and the fire-golden of fall: the farmers’ weather of Fresno, in which I lived and became a part of the human race.” – William Saroyan

“My Favorite Town, Fresno, California,” a story written by William Saroyan in 1952, has been featured in *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator Newspaper* in Watertown, MA. The story was contributed by Christine Vartanian Datian, a graduate of California State University, Fresno. She is the daughter of Alice Vartanian and the late Arthur Vartanian, and is a regular contributor to *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator Newspaper*.

Saroyan was born on August 31, 1908, in Fresno, California, to Armenak and Takuhi Saroyan, Armenian immigrants from Bitlis in Western Armenia, now a part of Turkey. Fresno’s native son and perhaps most famous Armenian, Saroyan was born into most humble circumstances. He was one of the most prolific writers of the 1930s and 1940s, writing extensively about the Armenian immigrant life and actually using the Fresno community as the setting and characters for many of his works. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1940, the New York Drama Critics’ Circle award and, in 1943, he won the Academy Award for Best Story for the film adaptation of his novel *The Human Comedy*. (In 1940, Saroyan refused the Pulitzer Prize for his play *The Time of Your Life*, performed in 1939, on the grounds that it was “no more great or good” than anything else he had written.) Author Kurt Vonnegut has said that Saroyan was “the first and still the greatest of all the American minimalists.”

To read this story, go to: <https://mirrorspectator.com/2024/12/16/in-tribute-my-favorite-town-fresno-by-william-saroyan-1952/>

Also see: In Memoriam November 1996: *AGBU Magazine*, at: <https://agbu.org/alex-manoogian-memorial/my-favorite-town-fresno-california>

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Dr. David Zakarian

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“Homeland vs. Home: When a Call to Return to the Homeland is Not Answered”

Kevork Oflazian

Friday, November 14, 2025 • 7:00pm

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“An Armenian Futūḥ Narrative: Lewond’s Eighth-Century History of the Caliphate”

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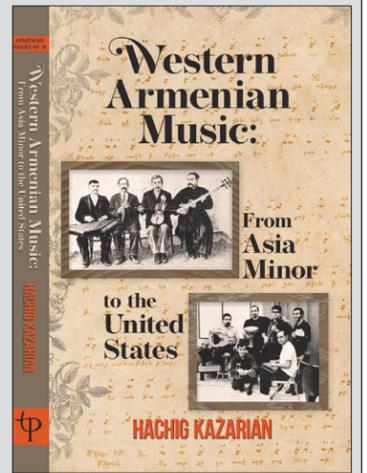
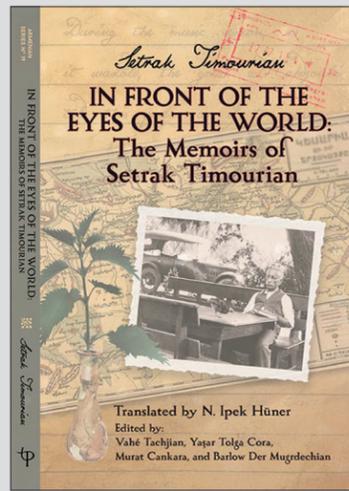
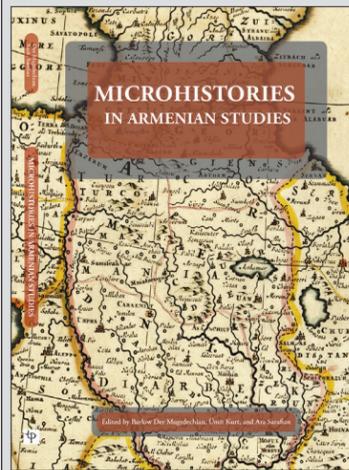
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